

Metro Nashville  
**Conservation Assistance Grant Fund**  
**Guidelines and Application**  
**2017**

**I. FUND PURPOSE**

The purpose of the grant fund is to assist in the conservation and preservation of Davidson County properties having natural, cultural, and environmental significance. The launch of this grant fund fulfills one of the recommendations of the 2017 Livable Nashville Report and of the 2017 Plan to Play Parks & Greenways Master Plan.

**II. ADMINISTRATION**

The Conservation Assistance Grant Fund is administered by the **Greenways and Open Space Commission** of the Metropolitan Government of Nashville and Davidson County pursuant to Ordinance BL2017-725.

Applications are accepted bi-annually by the Commission with **submittal deadlines of September 15 and March 15.**

Applications will be **evaluated using criteria** (page 3) for funding recommendations provided to the Greenways and Open Space Commission by its grant project manager in consultation with a technical review committee comprised of representatives from Metro departments, listed below:

Mayor's Office  
Parks  
Planning  
General Services  
Legal  
Water Services

Grant award decisions, which are subject to entry of a grant agreement, will be made by the Commission, typically within 30 calendar days of submittal deadlines.

Following an award decision and approval of the proposed grant agreement by the Metropolitan Council by resolution, a grant agreement will be executed by the Commission chair and grantee. A minimum of 30 days will typically be required for Metro Council approval of the proposed grant agreement. The grant approval process will typically take a total of 60 days after the application submittal deadline. Council filing and processing will be handled by the grant program project manager.

Applicants should use the **application form** at the end of this document.

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Applications should be emailed to **shain.dennison@nashville.gov**. Pre-application consultations can be made by appointment at this same email.

### III. FUND OBJECTIVES

Consistent with the Fund Purpose, specific Fund Objectives include :

- Protect important view sheds, park buffers, wildlife corridors, agricultural land, sensitive environmental habitats, ridge lines, floodplains, and other properties having natural or environmental significance as well as properties having cultural significance
- Leverage effective public/private partnerships to achieve the goals of conserving open space in Metro Nashville/Davidson County
- Increase ability to act on land protection opportunities that occur between Metro capital budget cycles by working with partner organizations
- Build collaborative efforts among conservation-focused non-profits on Metro government's priority areas
- Obtain public benefits through protective easements where Metro does not need to own the land

### IV. GRANT ELIGIBILITY AND CRITERIA

- Projects must be located in Davidson County
- Applications must be by a private non-profit conservation organization (a copy of the organization's most recent IRS form 990 or audited annual financial statement will be required)
- Projects must be for land with conservation attributes meeting the above stated program objectives
- Projects may be for fee simple acquisition or conservation easements resulting in permanent land protection
- Projects funded with Metro bond funds must include a real property interest such as co-held easements with Metro Parks and/or public access

- Higher priority will be given for projects which:
  - are located in conservation and open space focal areas identified in and that align with Metro plans such as the 2017 Livability Report, NashvilleNext, 2017 Plan To Play, and 2011 Open Space Plan
  - provide financial partnership contribution
- Eligible grant project costs and expenses that can be reimbursed may include:
  - hard costs associated with project transactions such as surveys, legal fees, and appraisals.
  - matching funds based on level of public access, benefit and merit
- Ineligible project expenses include operating, administrative and overhead costs
- Grant terms for project completion will be within a year of grant award unless the Commission approves a grant term extension. Grants may be retroactive not to exceed one year.

## IV. APPLICATION CRITERIA AND SCORING

### I. Attributes (up to 25 points)

This considers attributes to be conserved and who is receiving benefits of the project, including environmental, social, and economic public benefits. More points will be given to projects that demonstrate multiple public benefits.

#### POINTS

**20-25** Outstanding/Exceptional – national, state, regional or county importance

**10-19** Good - Davidson County strong conservation value

**0-9** Low – moderate conservation or open space values, unclear or unspecified

Examples:

- **Fish, Wildlife, Plants, and Unique Forest Communities** - contains unique forest communities and/or important fish or wildlife habitat as specified by a wildlife conservation plan or strategy

- **Water Supply Protection** - Contiguous riparian area, forested wetlands, shorelines, river systems, sensitive watershed lands, buffer to public drinking water supply or an aquifer recharge area
- **Public Access** - has full or limited access, and may include specific use restrictions
- **Scenic** - The site is located within a view-shed of a scenic feature, or area (such as park, trail, river, or highway)
- **Historic/Cultural/Archaeological** - documented cultural, historical or archaeological features located on site
- **Agricultural** – protects farm land or other food production open space
- **Tree Canopy** - helps Metro meet current tree canopy goals

## 2. Threatened (up to 25 points)

This estimates the likelihood for conversion, transfer or change of use of the property and its important attributes. It considers:

- **Degree of current legal protections** that exists on the property (e.g. current zoning or existing easements) and if these protections remove the threat of conversion
- **Landowner's circumstances** (e.g. good land steward interested in conserving land, property held in an estate, aging landowner and future use of property by heirs is uncertain, property is up for sale or has a sale pending, landowner has received purchase offers, public or other in holdings, etc.)
- **Adjacent land use changes** (rate of development growth and conversion, rate of population growth, rate of change in ownership, etc)
- **Type of land** (i.e. sensitive forest lands, farm land, etc.)

### POINTS

**20-25** Highly threatened

**10-19** Average/possible degree of threat

**0-9** Low to moderate degree of threat

Examples:

**High risk** - Circumstances indicate conversion is imminent or likely or may occur soon (0-3 years) or in the somewhat distant future (land has a subdivision plan, landowner has received offers from developers, landowner has sold off subdivisions of the property, land is located in a rapidly developing area, landowner(s) are aged or nearby comparable land has been recently sold for development

**Average/Possible Risk** - Circumstances indicate conversion could occur within 10 years: Land is in an attractive location for development such as waterfront or an outdoor recreation area.

**Unlikely any time soon** - beyond 10 years

*NOTE: If property has been acquired by a third party at the request of Metro, threatened will be evaluated based on the situation prior to the third party acquisition.*

### 3) Strategic (up to 25 points)

This reflects the project's relevance or relationship to conservation plans and efforts identified in relevant Metro plans cited above and may include the Greenways and Open Space Commission prioritization map and plan. It also demonstrates potential for leveraging additional protection opportunities.

#### POINTS

**20-25** High conservation strategic impact

**10-19** Average/possible strategic impact

**0-9** Low to moderate strategic impact

Examples:

**High** – is a key property in a national, state, regional or local conservation effort, formally developed state or local conservation plan/strategy

**Average/Possible** – project may fulfill or lead to opportunity to increase additional conservation action and/or partnership

**Low** - is an isolated tract with no known connection to conservation efforts or plans at this time

#### 4) Partnership (up to 25 points)

This demonstrates the contribution to the project of the applicant and any additional partnerships leveraged.

Scores in this section will be based on a % of the project that will be utilizing Metro Conservation Assistance Grant funds. The lower the % (which shows greater leveraging of funds), the higher the score:

##### POINTS

<b>1-10</b>	<b>100%-50%</b>	<b>(Low)</b>
<b>11-20</b>	<b>49%-25%</b>	<b>(Medium)</b>
<b>21-25</b>	<b>24%-below</b>	<b>(High)</b>

This should show:

- existing or future funding provided by the applicant to the project
- source of all funding partners (including all other sources whose funds have been requested;
- description of the details of any donation, if applicable
- value of real property owned by the applicant in a qualified pre-acquisition
- description of any other sources of funding including federal, state, municipal or nonprofit organizations

Example:

<u>Source of Funds</u>	<u>Amount</u>	<u>Status</u>
Private Foundation	\$100,000	In hand
Private Donors	\$ 50,000	Pledged
Other Grants	\$ 25,000	Pending